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Mayors of Minneapolis and Saint Paul Take 2008 Republican National Convention Plans to National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

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MINNEAPOLIS and SAINT PAUL, Minn., May 28 MN-GOP-Convention

Dignitaries Offer Sneak Peek into Unique Activities and Event Plans for Convention

MINNEAPOLIS and SAINT PAUL, Minn., May 28 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- With less than 100 days until the 2008 Republican National Convention, the MSP 2008 Host Committee along with the Mayors of Minneapolis and Saint Paul took their message to the National Press Club at a news conference held today in Washington, D.C. The event highlighted plans for the Convention and provided a sneak peek of what Minneapolis Saint Paul has to offer September 1-4.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080528/DC23658>)

Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak were joined by Cynthia Leshner, President of the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee, to tout the unique plans in store for the thousands of delegates, media members, dignitaries and visitors that will be coming to Minneapolis Saint Paul for the event.

"A political convention is second only to the Olympics in terms of exposure it brings to an area and we are thrilled that the eyes of the nation will be on Minneapolis and Saint Paul during the 2008 Republican National Convention," Leshner said. "Many people are unfamiliar with the Minneapolis Saint Paul area and we are poised to highlight our thriving arts and theater communities, fabulous dining, world-class shopping, vibrant business community and more."

It is estimated that the Convention will bring \$150 million to \$160 million in economic impact to Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the surrounding areas. In addition, more than 2,800 jobs will be created generating more than \$100 million in wages. The national exposure that will focus on Minneapolis Saint Paul and the surrounding area will be priceless.

"In less than 100 days, we will be introducing Saint Paul to 45,000 visitors and the world," Mayor Coleman said. "We trust that all of our guests will learn what we already know -- that our city is a wonderful place to visit, live, work and raise a family."

Several special events will be held in conjunction with the 2008 Republican National Convention including *CivicFest: A Very Minnesota Celebration*. *CivicFest* will be a nearly 300,000 square-foot event featuring more than 35 world-class, educational and entertaining exhibits, including historic memorabilia and artifacts celebrating Minnesota and American history, democracy and the U.S. presidency. More than 150,000 people are expected to attend *CivicFest*, which will be held August 29 - September 4 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

"We have been preparing for this Convention for many months, and we are ready to roll out the red carpet for the thousands of visitors on their way to Minneapolis Saint Paul in September," Mayor Rybak said. "With so much to offer, from arts and culture to the adventure of the great outdoors, we are confident that those planning to attend the Republican National Convention will have a great time in our city -- and will want to return."

Other events and activities include:

- **spark24** -- which will showcase Minneapolis Saint Paul's acclaimed arts community during 24 hours of non-stop unexpected performances and entertainment throughout downtown Minneapolis. The event will kick-off at 8 p.m. Saturday, August 30 and run up to 8 p.m. of Sunday, August 31. During this time downtown Minneapolis will become a marathon of free entertainment offering a total immersion into the Minneapolis Saint Paul arts experience featuring theatre, music and dance.
- **Hail to the Chief** -- presented by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), will feature paintings, sculpture, prints, photographs and decorative arts representing our country's presidency from George Washington to George W. Bush. The exhibition will be on view at the MIA from August 2 through September 21.
- **More to Minnesota GOParty Card** -- More than 400 businesses are participating in the program, which provides discounts and special deals to area businesses, restaurants, lodging, attractions and more to delegates, media and Convention attendees.
- **Pre-Convention Themed Media Tours** -- From the "Design City" tour of architectural highlights led by a nationally-known expert to "Let Me Take You to Funkytown" featuring an evening of stops at musical hotspots led by the man who penned the '70s hit single of

the same name, media will have an opportunity to learn more about the area during 12 complimentary tours offered Saturday, August 30 and Sunday, August 31.

- **Media Web Resources** - Several Web sites feature a plethora of information including:
 - MSPnewsroom.com -- Offers an in-depth media resource produced by Meet Minneapolis, the Official Convention + Visitors Bureau, showcasing the region including an interactive "beauty shot" map highlighting places where media can broadcast live; hundreds of print-quality downloadable images of the Minneapolis Saint Paul area; and downloadable b-roll assets (in addition to the full package served up via satellite Convention week). Also available for mobile devices at mobile.mspnewsroom.com. Site will launch May 21.
 - MSP2008.com -- Official Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee Site offering information about volunteering, delegate-experience programs, Convention apparel and more.
 - GOPconvention.com -- Provides information related to the Convention and the Republican Party including Convention venue guide and schedule, state delegations, media credentialing and more.

The 2008 Republican National Convention will be held September 1-4 at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul, Minn. More than 45,000 individuals, including 15,000 media, are expected to attend the Convention. The last national political convention held in Minnesota was in 1892 when President Benjamin Harrison received the nomination for the Republican Party.

About The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee

The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee is charged with promoting the commerce, image and prestige of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the entire region in preparation for the 2008 Republican National Convention. The Host Committee is made up of community leaders who are committed to educating people and businesses to come to Minnesota to work, live, play, visit and invest. For more information, visit www.msp2008.com.

Editor's Note: Event photographs available upon request.

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